

A Sly-Tongued Beggar To A Big Audience

Who do you put your nickles on? Some local hero?
Some body different, odd? Or someone I know?
I beg nickles for sagas. Why not? I've read
epitaph carved on crib, babes' taunt to the dead.
I hear what's said. So give me your small change.
Thrones built on nickles are hardly strange,
and I singsong good fortune. Buy in on what's said
before I'm dead.
Got a nickle?

Nickles **are** necessary. Each five-fold advance
outflanks some silence. Take a chance?
Take a handful of future. Texts await your choice.
Yang echoes, Yin reechoes, edicts of your voice
Some one's handout approved and made known
Epictetus in the pit, Aurelius on the throne.
Now what's heads or tails? Say, any chance
that bold face is your own?
All that -- on a nickle?

Faceless, but face up, I sit and hold
my hat to the sunlight. If you've got no gold,
how about a throwaway? If you say, don't invoke
a measure of heroes, I'll merely joke
about pennyworth patriots. Or would you be shown
men disfigured by luck, moneystruck, alone?
They wait to be sold. Say, can you spare
a nickle here,
a nickle there?

-- Sam Bradley

Honeybrook, Pa.